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A M 857 561 461 is first of all adjusted to their physical strength; in short, the playful imitation of adult activity is automatically replaced by actual work as soon as the necessary strength is there. Secondly, the work depends upon the seasons since, in general, the work of the Meau is conditioned by them.

Otherwise, there is no regulation of activity, either within the work group or with respect to the time that is to be spent at work and at play. Everything is arranged according to the work of the adults, into which all the children are always drawn. At the time when the fields are cultivated or when new villages are to be laid out, everyone must work uninterruptedly according to his strength from dawn to dusk, but during the period after the harvest there are long stretches of leisure, and the days are then filled with laughter and games. In any case, there is no more importance attached to a child's reaching the working age than to his completion of the sixth year, which is so significant for our children.

/70/ In general, it can be said that both sexes at about the age of sixteen are fully able to perform the work of the adults.

2. The Children's Group

A M 857 [156] As soon as the children of the Meau and Akha are three or four years old, they are admitted into the children's group (Ill. 14). Even earlier, however, they are taken along by their older siblings, on whose backs they participate in the games. There seems to be hardly any eccentrics among the children; at any rate, I never saw a child going about by himself.

M 857 157 The composition of the children's group varies greatly and depends on which children happen to have free time. Among the Meau, the leader of the group is always the child present at the moment who is physically the strongest, although there is no noticeable competition for the position of leader. All of them, however, know exactly who is the strongest, and accordingly they submit to him without demur. Sometimes there are scuffles within the group. Competition

/463 cont./

152 Emotions are readily apparent among the Meau. When a woman told us that three years ago her three sons had died of cholera within a few days, tears came into her eyes and she sobbed violently, though she was trying to master her emotions.

152 734 We were often able to observe how tenderly the Meau care for their sick. For example, a shaman had a completely paralyzed son about 22 years of age, who, however, was very active mentally. During the very first days of our stay, the old man carried his son on his back into our camp to ask me for help and healing. When I explained to him the hopelessness of the situation -- it was a case of progressive paralysis -- tears ran down his cheeks. Indeed, he had already so often beseeched his ancestors for help and offered them many sacrifices in vain. Nevertheless from then on the Meau always carried his son into our camp whenever I had some business with him, and tenderly laid him down near us so that he could participate in our conversations and thus be diverted.

● 156 123 The Meau are good-natured and companionable. In this connection I recall with what matter-of-fact hunting comradeship one Meau relieved me of my gun and rucksack and loaded them on his own back when he saw that, under the burden, I could scarcely keep up with his rapid pace in the steep thicket.

123 577 /464/ The Meau are almost excessively polite, without any influence on this behavior by materialistic mental reservations. Their innate politeness sometimes leads the Meau to little "white lies," which, however, according to their conception, are not regarded as lies. I had with me a white goat which was supposed to serve as tiger bait and had given it to the Meau to pasture in the maize fields. One day a Meau came to me and said: "Your goat seems to be sick. It has a wound in the stomach and has no appetite. I think that it will soon die." I, of course, had the goat brought to me immediately. It only had the skin on its stomach scratched a bit, and otherwise the animal was completely healthy. Later on it turned out that it had been in the way of the Meau during their harvesting.

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426 576 The extreme politeness of the Meau is also shown in collecting a debt. The Meau proceeds on the assumption that this demand for payment will not be a pleasant experience for the debtor, and /468/ the unpleasantness must be presented to him in the most amiable manner possible. The creditor announces his visit several months in advance. On the day set the debtor prepares a feast in which the creditor participates without saying a word about the debt. The Meau assume that this is superfluous, for the debtor knows only too well why the creditor has come. Shortly before the guest departs, the debt is paid without any request.

576 The same line of thought is the basis for the procedure of a visit if the visitor would like to make a request. Everything possible is discussed first, except the purpose of the call. The reason for the visit is mentioned quite casually only in connection with the repeatedly announced departure.

192 576 As "please," the Meau use the word tău or tău mĕn yē, which literally means "please a little"; "thank you" is tŏ tsę, but one usually says tŏ tsę hŏ lŏ, with the meaning of "thank you very kindly!" As affirmation, the Meau use yā; as negation, kŭ tsĭ ŏă. They also have expressions for a number of emotions: esteem = lău sĭ yŭń; veneration = lău sĭ lŭ lę; contempt = hŭ yŭ; fear, horror = hŭĭ; hatred = a drawn-out o, amazement = ŏŭ.

●156 The Meau vary greatly in their mental abilities. One finds average persons among them, but in addition personalities with pronounced qualities of leadership, who stand out because of a talent for organization, which is peculiar to the Meau in general to a high degree, as well as because of heightened rhetorical gifts and an innate authority which everywhere is made up of the immeasurable, imponderable qualities of a natural leader. Such a born leader, for example, was the 115 Meau chief, Tsin Tsai, whose hospitality we enjoyed for some 156 time and with whom I undertook hunting expeditions. It is 622 interesting how his personality impressed even an unprejudiced 123 European observer. For this reason I shall reproduce the pertinent section from my wife's journal:

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"Chief Tsin Tsai is a wonderful fellow. When he sits cross-legged on the ground, his long back hair knotted, the long tobacco pipe in his hand, his high forehead furrowed in thought, tensing the muscles of his lean jaws, /469/ stroking his sparse beard which hangs down from his strongly projecting zygomatic arches, he is so remarkably the typical representative of his industrious people, and yet he towers above their average. Not for a moment is he idle or unoccupied. Now he plaits a basket; scarcely finished, he cuts up a piece of game and distributes the meat, and now he sharpens his knife on a stone and goes into the bush for a few minutes. There he digs up some edible roots and brings them to us as a welcome supplement to our monotonous diet in the camp and visits my husband at his work in order to propose a hunting trip together. As soon as my husband has consented, he goes into his house to lay out a stick oracle and ask the spirits in which direction he must turn in order to have success, what kind of booty he can expect, and more of the same. During this time his people have come back from the fields. They quietly wait for the oracle and then turn to the chief with a series of questions. Quietly and decisively the latter now gives his orders and then is off on the hunt."

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A few pages further in her journal my wife returns to the chief: "It is a pleasure to watch Tsin Tsai at work. He is friendly and helpful, offers us every service, carries the hand luggage, and regards no work as 'beneath his dignity.' Moreover, he is clever, circumspect, and prudent; he sizes up the situation immediately and is able to differentiate between the essential and the nonessential. He answers questions with brief, logical, and sensible replies. If one asks him for advice, he always supplements his information with detailed reasoning. To be sure, in matters dealing with hunting, he always judges for us on the basis of his own experiences, so that sometimes differences result. He maintains, for instance, that, after a shot, tigers come along to search for wounded game, whereas our experience was that they immediately disappeared, never to be seen again. Moreover, wild animals were generally much more timid than he expected, probably because there were more of us than he was accustomed to.

/469 cont./

115 His unconditional reliance on the information from the spirits
156 by way of the oracle is characteristic of him. We also discovered
622 that prior to our arrival he had asked the spirits what our secret
123 intentions were. The information must have been favorable
[787] for us, since he decided to obey us unconditionally. /470/ I can well imagine, however, that if the opposite had been the case, everything would have been other but pleasant.

"Tsin Tsai carefully cultivates his fields and in addition is an excellent smith who is even able to forge guns and to melt and work silver. He knows how to make paper as well as to castrate animals. His real passion is for the hunt. Finally, he
[756] also acts as shaman, questions the spirits, and offers sacrifices to
[757] the ancestors and spirits. He also, however, undoubtedly possesses medical knowledge, and the Meau come to him from afar in order to be treated by him. Without detriment to these activities, he discharges his duties as village chief and judge to the satisfaction of all."

762 Although the vitality of the Meau seems almost inexhaustible and they are very cheerful, suicides nevertheless occur. In three instances that I learned of, it was a matter of unhappily married women who had no chance of getting a divorce. In one case, a young man could not get along with his older brother who was acting as the head of the family.

53 The Meau are not especially good orators, but on the other hand are very talented lyrically as poets and singers.

177 In keeping with their great vitality, they are open to innovations if a thing does not conflict with their tradition, their religious prohibitions, or their experiences. They indeed cling tenaciously to their traditional attire, but, from what has been said, they may be regarded as quite adaptable. To be sure, Savina (1)

1. II, p. 188.

states: "During the course of his migration he (the Meau, note by Dr. B.) has seen among other peoples houses that were much more comfortable than his own. And yet it never occurs to him to build something similar." In my opinion, however, this does

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A 152 648 /473 cont./ of it back to their villages, the Akha, unbusinesslike despite their covetousness, squandered their earnings.

A 574 123 Another characteristic contrast in relation to the Meau was striking. The extremely hospitable Meau, as was pointed out, showed real gratitude for the board and lodging that we provided for them in the city, whereas the Akha, though they had charged me as much as possible for everything in their villages, now viewed it as their manifest right to live as guests at my expense. In one respect, however, the members of the A 152 two mountain peoples were alike, namely, in their homesickness for their mountains, which was openly expressed, though they stayed in the city for only a few days and were offered so much that was new and stimulating there.

A 181 556 555 Whereas the Meau value ability in itself, among the Akha the material possessions are of primary significance in evaluating a person. Among them the one who has much money and adornment is regarded as wise. /474/ It was also stressed several times that a person is wise and clever if he A knows how to speak well, for the Akha are much more fluent in M speech than the Meau. Among the latter, the women are superior [156] in expressing themselves, whereas among the Akha the men [191] surpass the women considerably.

A 123 574 609 622 Their fluency of speech, as well as their mistrustful reserve, was in evidence on the occasion of the first greeting in front of an Akha village. In accordance with the custom, we waited at one of the entrance gates until we were given permission to enter the village. If the visitor is of high social position, the guest is received by the chief himself in solemn fashion. When we visited a large Akha village at the foot of the Doy Tung, we experienced such a reception, which I described in my journal as follows: "We stopped in front of the six large gate-arches decorated with carvings, through which no stranger may pass without the express approval of the chief. Three old men, the chief of the village among them, solemnly approached us in greeting, squatted on the ground, and offered A us rice, salt, and water in a flower-decorated bowl. They [273] offered us a welcoming drink in small bowls full of rice liquor.